

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A consumable item ~~keeping~~ system, comprising:

a consumable item ~~keeping~~ apparatus configured to store a variety of consumable items for an image forming apparatus at a user side;

a consumable item supplying section configured to supply a variety of consumable items for the image forming apparatus to a the user side upon request, said consumable item supplying section being connected to the consumable item ~~keeping~~ apparatus via a communication circuit;

~~a consumable item replenishment level setting device configured to set a consumable item replenishment level for the consumable item keeping apparatus;~~

at least a first sensor configured to detect that a corresponding consumable item in the image forming apparatus needs replenishment;

at least a second sensor configured to detect one of a type and a size of the corresponding consumable item needing replenishment in the image forming apparatus;

a consumable item replenishment signal generating device configured to generate a signal ~~indicative of arrival of the consumable items at the consumable item replenishment level~~ indicating said first sensor has detected the corresponding consumable item needs replenishment; and

a detector configured to detect the signal generated by the generating device;

a counter configured to count a duration of time period that said detector detects said signal, said time period being adjustably set at the user side;

a consumable item order data transmitting device configured to transmit order data indicating a request for the corresponding consumable items item that needs to be replenished to the consumable item supplying section via the communication circuit, when the

~~consumable item replenishment~~ signal is ~~generated~~ detected continuously by the detecting device for more than the time period set at the user side; and

a delivery data transmitting device included in the consumable item supplying section and configured to transmit delivery data of the corresponding consumable items item from the consumable item supplying section to the user side such that a delivery status of the corresponding consumable item to be replenished can be confirmed.

Claims 2-5 (Canceled).

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Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item ~~keeping~~ system as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1, 2 and 3~~ claim 1, further comprising:

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a data receiving device configured to receive the order data transmitted from the order data transmitting device; and

~~a determining device configured to determine at least a kind and an amount of consumable items to be delivered from the consumable item supplying section to a user according to the order data.~~

Claim 7 (Canceled).

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item ~~keeping~~ system as claimed in claim [7] 1, wherein said delivery data includes information of ~~both~~ corresponding to a day when distribution of the corresponding consumable item distribution is commenced is started by the consumable item supplying section and a day when the corresponding consumable items are item is scheduled to be delivered to the user side.

Claim 9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item keeping system as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1, 2 and 3~~ claim 1, wherein said communication device includes a wireless system.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item keeping system as claimed in claim 9 1, wherein said ~~inventory detecting device~~ consumable item keeping system is employable regardless of a model and manufacturer of the image forming apparatus.

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Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item keeping system as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1, 2 and 3~~ claim 1, wherein said order data is reset when said signal disappears before ~~a prescribed~~ said time period has elapsed.

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Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item keeping system as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1, 2, 3 and 4~~ claim 1, wherein said consumable item data transmitting device is disposed at the user side.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item keeping system as claimed in [any one of claims 1, 2, and 3] claim 1, wherein said data receiving device is disposed at the consumable item supply section.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item keeping system as claimed in ~~any one of claims 3 and 4~~ claim 1, further comprising a display at the user side on which said delivery data is displayed.

Claim 16 (Canceled).

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): A method for keeping consumable ~~item~~ items, comprising the steps of:

setting a consumable item replenishment level for a corresponding consumable items item for an image forming apparatus stored in a consumable item keeping apparatus at a user side;

detecting that a corresponding consumable item in the image forming apparatus needs replenishment based on the setting step;

detecting one of a type and a size of the corresponding consumable item needing replenishment in the image forming apparatus;

generating a signal ~~indicative of arrival of~~ indicating replenishment of the ~~corresponding consumable items at the consumable item replenishment level~~ item has been detected;

detecting the signal generated in the generating step;

counting a duration of time period that the generated signal is detected, said time period being adjustably set at the user side;

transmitting order data ~~of consumable items~~ indicating a request for the corresponding consumable item that needs to be replenished to a consumable item supplying section via a communication circuit, when the signal is continuously detected for more than the time period set at the user side; and

transmitting delivery data of the corresponding consumable item to be distributed from the consumable item supplying section to the user side such that a delivery status of the corresponding consumable item to be replenished can be confirmed.

Claims 18 and 19 (Canceled).

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item keeping method as claimed in ~~any one of claims 17, 18 and 19~~ claim 17, further comprising a step of:

displaying information of the delivery data at the user side.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): A consumable item keeping system comprising:

consumable item keeping means for storing a variety of consumable items for an image forming apparatus at a user side;

consumable item supplying means for supplying a variety of consumable items for the image forming apparatus to a the user side upon request, said consumable item supplying means being connected to the consumable item keeping means via communication means;

~~consumable item replenishment level setting means for setting a consumable item replenishment level for each consumable item;~~

at least a first means for detecting that a corresponding consumable item in the image forming apparatus needs replenishment;

at least a second means for detecting one of a type and a size of the corresponding consumable item needing replenishment in the image forming apparatus;

signal generating means for generating a signal ~~indicative of arrival of the consumable items at the consumable item replenishment level~~ indicating said first means has detected the corresponding consumable item needs replenishment;

signal detecting means for detecting the signal generated by the signal generating means; and

counting means for counting a duration of time that said detecting means detects said signal, said time period being adjustably set at the user side;

consumable item order data transmitting means for transmitting order data indicating a request for the corresponding consumable items item that needs to be replenished to the consumable item supplying means via the communication means, when the signal detecting means ~~detect~~ continuously detects the signal for more than the time period set at the user side;

and
delivery data transmitting means included in the consumable item supplying means for transmitting delivery data indicating a consumable item distributing day and consumable item scheduled delivery day from the consumable item supplying means to the user side such that a delivery status of the corresponding consumable items to be replenished can be confirmed.

Claim 22 (Canceled).

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): A The consumable item ~~keeping~~ system as claimed in ~~any one of claims 21 and 22~~ claim 21, further comprising:

displaying means for displaying the delivery data at the user side.

Claim 24 (New): A consumable item system, comprising:

a consumable item apparatus configured to store a variety of consumable items for an image forming apparatus at a user side;

a consumable item supplying section configured to supply a variety of consumable items for the image forming apparatus to the user side upon request, said consumable item

supplying section being connected to the consumable item apparatus via a communication circuit;

at least a first sensor configured to detect that a corresponding consumable item in the image forming apparatus needs replenishment;

a consumable item order data transmitting device configured to transmit order data indicating a request for the corresponding consumable item that needs to be replenished to the consumable item supplying section via the communication circuit, when the first sensor detects needs of replenishment;

a delivery data transmitting device included in the consumable item supplying section and configured to transmit delivery data of the corresponding consumable item from the consumable item supplying section to the user side such that a delivery status of the corresponding consumable item to be replenished can be confirmed; and

a display at the user side on which said delivery data is displayed.

Claim 25 (New): A method for keeping consumable items, comprising the steps of:
setting a consumable item replenishment level for a corresponding consumable item for an image forming apparatus stored in a consumable item apparatus at a user side;

detecting that a corresponding consumable item in the image forming apparatus needs replenishment based on the setting step;

transmitting order data indicating a request for the corresponding consumable item that needs to be replenished to a consumable item supplying section via a communication circuit, when the detecting step detects needs of replenishment;

transmitting delivery data of the corresponding consumable item to be distributed from the consumable item supplying section to the user side such that a delivery status of the corresponding consumable item to be replenished can be confirmed; and

displaying information of the delivery data at the user side.

Claim 26 (New): A consumable item system comprising:

consumable item means for storing a variety of consumable items for an image forming apparatus at a user side;

consumable item supplying means for supplying a variety of consumable items for the image forming apparatus to the user side upon request, said consumable item supplying means being connected to the consumable item means via communication means;

at least a first means for detecting that a corresponding consumable item in the image forming apparatus needs replenishment;

consumable item order data transmitting means for transmitting order data indicating a request for the corresponding consumable item that needs to be replenished to the consumable item supplying means via the communication means, when the first means for detecting detects needs of replenishment;

delivery data transmitting means included in the consumable item supplying means for transmitting delivery data indicating a consumable item distributing day and consumable item scheduled delivery day from the consumable item supplying means to the user side such that a delivery status of the corresponding consumable items to be replenished can be confirmed; and

display means for displaying the delivery data at the user side.

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Combined